

rods, in a remote desert tunnel in Nevada, where we used to blow up atom bombs on the surface. It ought to be done. By refusing to allow spent fuel to be safely stored, it compromises our ability to produce more of our energy by nuclear power which produces absolutely zero air pollution. It is a nonpolluting source of power.

France already generates 80 percent of their power by nuclear power. Japan is moving in that direction. We have to realize we need to do more with nuclear power. In fact, in this country, over 20 percent of our power comes from nuclear. But we have not ordered and brought on-line a new plant in over 20 years.

Those are the actions which must be done. The policies this administration support are wrong, the consequence of these policies are clear: shortage of energy and higher prices. That is what will occur. That is what is occurring. I think we need strong leadership from this administration to deal with this problem now.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### STORMS IN NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, today Governor Schafer, from my State of North Dakota, has made a request of President Clinton in the form of a disaster declaration request as a result of substantial damage that has occurred in North Dakota from some huge storms that have rumbled across our State in recent weeks. About a week ago, late in the afternoon, in the Fargo-Moorhead region of North Dakota-Minnesota, huge thunderstorms rolled across the northern plains and dumped 7 to 8 inches of rain on that flat land in the Red River Valley in a matter of 8 hours—7 to 8 inches of rain in 8 hours. This occurred only a week after some regions just 80 to 90 miles North of there received 17 to 18 inches of rain in a very short period of time: 24 to 36 hours. There was an enormous quantity of rain.

These two storm events occurred in the Red River Valley, which is as flat as a table top. There is not a hill in sight. The result was dramatic sheet flooding in every direction. I recently took a tour of some affected regions in northeastern North Dakota—Grand Forks County and Walsh County and other areas, and small communities like Langdon, Mekinock, and a range of other communities. Communities in the region were hit with more moisture than anyone had ever seen in their lifetime in such a short period of time.

As a result, flat fields were totally inundated with water. Roads and railroad lines were washed away. There was one area I traversed in which they had a box culvert that weighed about 2

to 3 tons. The force of the water—which, incidentally, totally inundated these fields—washed out a 2-ton box culvert, and nobody could find it. It was gone. How does one lose a 2-ton box culvert? Yet it was gone.

It is hard to imagine these flooding events unless one sees them personally. We have had two of them in two weeks in the eastern part of North Dakota, and they have been devastating. As a result, the Governor has made a disaster declaration request of the President, a request which I fully support and upon which I hope the President will act with dispatch this week. FEMA is continuing in both of these areas—northeastern North Dakota and also the Fargo region—to do their damage assessments. Sufficient work has been done on the damage assessments for us to know we are going to require some Federal assistance.

Some people say: Why is there Federal help available in the form of disaster assistance? Precisely because there are some events which occur—floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, fires, and so on—that are so large and so significant and cause so much damage that State and local governments cannot possibly deal with the resulting damage.

That is why the rest of the country says: You have had some trouble, let us give you a helping hand. That is what happened during the 1997 floods from the Red River in the Red River Valley which most everyone will remember. That is what happened with the Los Angeles earthquake. That is what happened when the Southern United States experienced substantial tornado and hurricane damage.

We regret we have to come again with a request for disaster assistance, but we do. It is not of our making. It is an act of nature that is quite unusual. I have not, in all of my life, seen a circumstance where, in a period of 24 to 36 hours, we had 17 to 18 inches of rainfall in a very small area. We are a semiarid State. We get 17 inches of rain in a year in North Dakota on average. Yet a week ago today, Fargo and Moorhead received 7 to 8 inches of rain in a matter of 8 hours and, as I said, 90 miles north of there, they received 17 to 18 inches in some parts in a matter of 24 to 36 hours. One can imagine the devastation that causes.

We are trying to wrap up a supplemental appropriations bill probably by tomorrow evening. The hope is that it gets filed tomorrow evening. Both sides want to get it to the President for his signature by the end of this week. It will be attached to the military construction bill.

I am working with my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee to make certain these flood events are mentioned in the context of that supplemental bill. I expect FEMA already has the resources with which to deal with this, if and when the President declares a disaster.

I wanted to bring to my colleagues' attention the request the Governor of

North Dakota has made. My expectation is the President will move quickly to respond to it, and my concern is that we do everything we can not only to deal with the issue of infrastructure damage to public buildings, and there is substantial damage in those areas—roads, buildings, water and sewage systems—but also that we are able to be helpful to family farmers, many of whom have lost virtually all of their crops, crops they dutifully planted this spring with such great hope and now have been completely decimated by these sheet floods.

My colleagues and I who come from this region of the country will continue to work on all of these issues. We are joined by our colleagues from the State of Minnesota because all this occurs on the North Dakota-Minnesota border.

#### ENERGY

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I want to talk about the issue of energy supplies and the debate over energy. I noticed today a number of Senators came to the floor of the Senate, and they waved their arms and raised their voices a bit and railed about energy: Lord, we should know what is going on here, they say. We have the OPEC cartel, yes, but we also have an administration that does not have an energy policy, and woe is us.

This is not brain surgery. This is not complicated at all. We have a cartel called OPEC that controls a substantial amount of the oil that is exported to this country, and they decided to decrease production. When they did, prices began to go up.

More than that, we also have the largest oil companies in this country and around the world merging. Exxon, Amoco, BP, are all merging. We have larger oil companies and a circumstance of a cartel supplier, and now people who go to the gas pumps are paying higher and higher energy prices.

I do not hear any discussion about whether the energy companies may have played a role in this. Does anybody understand how, when you get larger, you also have the opportunity to manipulate prices? I think you do.

Is a major part of this problem the OPEC cartel? You bet your life it is. But I think another part of this problem is we do not understand pricing policies of energy companies that have become larger and larger. We need to know that. That is why I fully support the Federal Trade Commission's investigation, and why I believe the Justice Department ought to be part of the same investigation.

I find it interesting, as the oil companies become larger and continue to oppose ethanol production, Congress has still not done nearly enough to promote the kind of energy supplies that are renewable—wind energy and others. We ought to get, in my judgment, a wake-up call from these oil prices that we are held hostage by the OPEC cartel. We are a growing economy and

produce and use a substantial amount of energy, but we are far too dependent on OPEC countries.

If one looks at production of energy, it does not matter who is in the White House—a Republican or Democratic administration—we see that same line, and the line is not going up, it is marginally going down. We need an energy policy that is a Republican and Democratic energy policy, not one about which one side continues to wave and rail about the other side. We need a bipartisan energy strategy that recognizes this country should not be beholden to an OPEC cartel for its energy supplies. Not to do so means we put ourselves at risk, we put our economies at risk, and put the American people at risk when, in some cases, they cannot purchase the energy they need.

#### A PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT IN MEDICARE

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I want to talk about the subject that is going to be front and center in the Congress this week, the issue of a prescription drug benefit and Medicare. There are stories in today's papers—the Washington Post, the New York Times, and others—in which the chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee is quoted as saying that there is a belief that his party, meaning Congressional Republicans, need to do something on the issue of prescription drugs. He says, "It's a great issue—no question it polls well."

Another member from the other side of the aisle said: "We're going to use the marketplace pressure to solve the problem, which is much better than the government program."

In other words, the majority party feels they have to bring a bill to the floor addressing the need for prescription drug coverage because the issue polls well. So they are going to bring an illusory bill to the floor of the House this week that requires private insurance companies to offer an insurance policy that helps people pay for their prescription drugs. The catch is that the insurance companies say they cannot offer such a policy. Officials from two companies have come to my office and told me that, to offer a policy with \$1,000 in benefits, it would cost \$1,200.

I come from a rural State. In rural States, a recent study shows that rural Medicare beneficiaries pay 25 percent more out-of-their own pockets for prescription drugs than do urban beneficiaries. Of course, rural areas are shrinking. Many have seen the movie "Four Weddings and a Funeral." In rural areas of my State, ministers tell me they have four funerals for every wedding because the population is getting older and the younger people are moving out.

And those senior citizens living in rural areas are the ones who are paying the highest prices for prescription drugs.

And many of them cannot afford the drugs they need. They have heart trouble, diabetes, and a range of other problems. Their doctors say: You need to take this miracle medicine, this life-saving drug, to help you live a better life. And they say to their doctors: I can't afford it.

We need to do two things. First, we need to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program, and second, we need to put downward pressure on drug prices.

I thought I might, with my colleagues' consent, show on the floor of the Senate a couple of pill bottles that illustrate part of the problem. Here are two bottles for a prescription drug called Zocor used to lower cholesterol. This is the same tablet, in the same strength, made by the same company, probably made in the same manufacturing plant. If you buy Zocor in Canada, it costs \$1.82 per pill. But if you buy the same drug—the same pill, made by the same company—in the United States, it costs \$3.82 per pill.

Let me say that again. If you are a Canadian, you pay \$1.82 for Zocor; if you are an American, you pay \$3.82, more than twice as much. Why? Because the big drug manufacturers have decided they want to charge the American consumer more than twice as much.

One other example, if I might. Here are bottles of Zoloft. Zoloft is a common prescription drug used to fight depression. If you buy this medication in Canada—the same pill, in the same strength, by the same drug company—it costs \$1.28 per pill. But if you buy it in North Dakota, it costs \$2.34 per pill. The Canadian pays \$1.28; the American pays \$2.34, 83 percent more.

I have other examples, but I think you get the point: American consumers pay the highest prices in the world for their prescription drugs. These are the prices that our current marketplace have achieved. Why should an American citizen have to go to Canada to buy a drug that was produced in the United States in order to pay half the price that is charged in the United States? The answer is that they should not have to do that.

I think these examples illustrate why, when those on the other side of the aisle say "we're going to use the marketplace pressure to solve the problem," this marketplace approach just is not going to work. We need a real prescription drug benefit added to the Medicare program. What we do not need is an illusion of a benefit where we tell private insurance companies to sell a policy they say they can't underwrite and won't sell.

That is not good public policy. Maybe the polls show that Medicare prescription drug coverage is a popular issue, but you do not solve a problem, no matter how popular an issue, by coming up with a solution that does not work.

We need to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program in a

way that is sensible and thoughtful and workable. And, second, as we do that, we need to put some downward pressure on prescription drug prices.

It is not fair, right, or reasonable that the American consumer ought to pay double the price for the same drug, put in the same bottle, manufactured by the same company. That is not fair. The common medications that senior citizens so often need—to treat their heart problems, diabetes, arthritis, and so many other difficulties—have been increasing in cost at a dramatic rate.

I am not talking about creating price controls, but we need to do something to put some downward pressure on prices. One thing we should do is pass legislation that I have introduced, along with Senator SNOWE, Senator WELLSTONE and others, that will allow American consumers to have access to these drugs from anywhere in the world, as long as they are FDA-approved with safe manufacturing standards. This legislation, the International Prescription Drug Parity Act, will allow Americans to access these drugs from anywhere in the world at a lower price.

If we eliminate the legal obstacles that currently exist and allow pharmacists to purchase these medications from other countries on behalf of their American customers, the pharmaceutical industry will be forced to re-price their drugs in this country.

In short, I wanted to come to the floor to make the point that we must put a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare program, but we must do it in a way that works. We should not do this just so some will be able to go home to their states and say: We passed prescription drug coverage, didn't we? That might provide some self-satisfaction but it does nothing for the millions of Medicare beneficiaries who need prescription drug coverage. And finally, as we develop this legislation, we need to acknowledge that drug pricing is unfair in this country and do something to put some downward pressure on prescription drug prices.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.N. CHARTER

Mr. GRAMS. Madam President, fifty-five years ago, the members of the United Nation's founding delegation met in San Francisco for the signing ceremony that created the U.N. There was great anticipation and a collective enthusiasm for this new, global institution. Delegates spoke of hope, of expectation, of the promise of peace. President Truman echoed the thoughts of those founding members when he told the delegates they had, "created a great instrument for peace and security and human progress in the world." Fifty-five years later, the United Nations is struggling to meet its potential.

As Chairman of the International Operations Subcommittee which has U.N. oversight responsibilities and having been appointed by the President to